

Mr. Speaker, I will be placing in the RECORD the letter from nine Members of Congress to President Bush and the article that appeared today in The Washington Post.

MARRIAGE PENALTY

(Mr. RYUN of Kansas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RYUN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, in 2001 and again in 2003, this body passed legislation that eliminated the marriage tax penalty, saving families an average of \$1,400. Unfortunately, unless we act to permanently eliminate the marriage penalty, married couples will face tax increases starting next year. We should not discourage marriages by making couples sign on to a higher tax bill with their marriage certificate.

There is no good reason to raise taxes on married couples. In the midst of a strong economic recovery, imposing higher taxes on married couples will only create financial hardship for millions of Americans and stifle a growing economy. If we examine the consequences of the marriage penalty on the American family, we will not have to think twice about permanently repealing this particular act.

If we do not act, we will send in my district nearly 62,000 families a higher bill on January 1. Instead, let us tell them that we have finally put an end to the marriage tax penalty. I urge my colleagues to vote for this bill.

JOBS

(Mr. MEEK of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to not only report to the American people an unfortunate event we are going through here in the United States, living under the highest deficit in the history of the Republic and losing 2.8 million jobs since the Bush administration has been in control of our government.

I think it is very, very important for the American people to understand that Democrats in this House are looking for sensible tax relief and also reducing the deficit along with creating manufacturing jobs. I am talking about those 2.8 million Americans that are out of work and who had jobs and were paying taxes and were also providing health care, or trying to pay for health care, for their families.

I think it is very, very important the American people pay very close attention to those that are trying to push forward reasonable tax relief, student loan opportunities for the middle class, and who want to make sure we can move forward in building America and manufacturing jobs and making sure that we close the gap on the 2.8 million jobs that have been lost under this administration.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COMMANDER DANIEL PETTIGREW

(Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in paying respect to one of my constituents, Lieutenant Commander Daniel Pettigrew, U.S. Navy, retired, of Middletown, Maryland, who passed away on Wednesday, April 21. Dan Pettigrew was a 26-year Navy veteran, retiring in 1974. He served his country with distinction, and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the National Navy Achievement Medal, the Navy Commendation Medal, the Navy Unit Commendation, and the Navy Marine Corps Medal.

Dan was a member of Middletown United Methodist Church; VFW Post 3285 John R. Webb, Frederick; Masonic Lodge AF&AM in Massachusetts. He also served as a national legislative director for the Uniformed Services Disabled Retirees. In his role at the USDR, he worked tirelessly on the issues of concurrent receipt, veterans health care, and VA disability compensation.

Dan's last 6 years were spent walking the halls of Congress bringing the message about the needs of military retirees, veterans, and their families across the Nation. Please join me in remembering Dan and his valiant causes that he supported so diligently for our veterans, military retirees, and their families.

JOBS IN AMERICA

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, congratulations to the Bush administration on yet another record: 354,000 people exhausted their unemployment benefits in March, the largest number since we started keeping statistics in 1971; and yet they cannot find work.

We have 1.5 million people since the program ended in December, and the President and the Republican leadership have refused to renew the program. There are 23,000 Oregonians, people who want and cannot find work. They are the long-term army of the unemployed in America due to outsourcing and misplaced budget priorities.

But the administration will not extend unemployment benefits to them because then they would have to admit that the rosy glow they want to paint upon the economy and job prospects actually is a sunset.

So are they worried about creating deficits? No. There are \$17 billion in the Unemployment Trust Fund. Why do they not care about this army of unemployed Americans? Why will they

not help them find work, and while they are still looking for work, help them keep their families together and keep their homes with extended unemployment benefits out of the trust fund balance that is sitting unspent?

VOLUNTEER MILITARY EXCEEDING RE-ENLISTMENT EXPECTATIONS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today's all-volunteer military protects Americans every day by bravely fighting the war on terrorism in Afghanistan, Iraq, and wherever terrorists attack. Despite the sacrifice and commitment service in our armed service requires, and despite the enemies of freedom who are attacking America and its allies, troops are reenlisting at rates exceeding our expectations.

September 11 changed America's psychology. Americans know there is a real and visible threat to our life and liberty. The troops who are signing back up for service know better than anyone how important this fight against terrorism is to the future of our Nation and to freedom throughout the world to protect American families.

Mr. Speaker, we have 1.4 million men and women who are on active duty, along with 1.2 million who serve in the Guard and Reserves. These volunteers and their families are dedicated individuals who have chosen a life of honor and duty to our country. I ask all my colleagues to join me in thanking servicemembers for their service.

In conclusion, may God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, 30 years ago President Bush and Senator KERRY received their reviews from their respective commanders.

Lieutenant Kerry, from Lieutenant Commander George Elliott: "Lt. Kerry frequently exhibited a high sense of imagination and judgment in planning operations against the enemy in the Mekong Delta. Involved in several enemy-initiated firefights, including an ambush during the Christmas truce, he effectively suppressed enemy fire and is unofficially credited with 20 enemy killed in action."

The evaluation from Lt. Bush's commander: "Lt. Bush has not been observed at this unit during the period of this report."

Now, we can debate what these two men did 30 years ago, or we can debate what this country is going to do on